

Book reviews

Developmental Neuropathology. By R. L. Friede. (Pp. xii + 524; illustrated; \$842; DM122; \$50.10.) Vienna, New York: Springer-Verlag. 1975.

This book is designed to act as a supplement to general textbooks of neuropathology, most of which do not go into very great detail about the pathological changes in the central nervous system of babies and children. It is divided into three main sections: acquired lesions in newborns and infants; malformations; and metabolic diseases; with an addendum on the involvement of the nervous system in haematological diseases. The illustrations are good and plentiful (163 figures), showing mainly macroscopic appearances and those seen by light microscopy. The bibliography is extensive.

The pathology of the infant nervous system is a somewhat neglected subject, largely, one suspects, because of the technical difficulties involved in examining the brain, which is soft and easily damaged during removal. It is little appreciated by general pathologists that damage done at the time of the removal of the brain may well make it virtually impossible to undertake an adequate study of the organ since the brainstem, the region of the hypothalamus, and the spinal cord, not to mention the pituitary, can easily suffer trauma of a degree which renders adequate examination impossible. A further reason for neglect is that the production of good histological preparations is extremely difficult and taxes the best of histological technicians to the uttermost.

It is to be hoped that this book, by showing up the very extensive gaps in our knowledge of the growing brain, will encourage more research in this most difficult of all fields in neuropathology.

The volume, as would be expected from this publisher, is a first-rate example of bookmaking. It is a valuable addition to the literature.

P. M. DANIEL

A Laboratory Guide to Clinical Diagnosis. 4th edition. By R. D. Eastham. (Pp. viii + 303; £2.50.) Bristol: John Wright. 1976.

Dr Eastham describes what happens to virtually anything measurable in various clinical disorders. Whether or not this book will be of use to its possessor depends entirely on the locally available assistance.

How can the book be employed? Either to prescribe a plan of investigation or to explain unforeseen results. However, dealing, for instance, with Addisonian pernicious anaemia on one page, too much is mentioned for diagnosis and too little is mentioned to explain. Evidently Dr Eastham assumes he is guiding a doctor who has sophisticated laboratory services available. In such circumstances the clinician with a diagnostic problem would be well advised to consult with a laboratory-based colleague before embarking upon a panoply of tests as itemized in Dr Eastham's book.

Diagnosis spans a spectrum from the self-evident to the obscure and beyond that, to what is currently unknowable. This book has been published in four editions in 12 years. This must reflect its popularity. Its content is mostly correct. Nonetheless I believe that it perpetuates dogmatic principles in clinical investigation which should be questioned. Measuring everything or measuring nothing is neither clever, economical, nor instructive. Investigation should provide information. Information is what you didn't know before you knew it and what you can use once you have it. I am left wondering whether anyone who needs to use this book should really have direct access to the laboratory services of a hospital.

M. ROSE

Oral Mucosa in Health and Disease. Edited by A. E. Dolby. (Pp. xv + 512; illustrated; £16.00.) Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1975.

The editor of this book states that it provides a critical presentation of modern scientific knowledge relating to oral mucosa, and that it is intended primarily for graduates with a clinical or biological interest in the oral mucosa. In general, Professor Dolby and his contributors have achieved these objectives very well. The first and longest chapter, entitled *Structure and Function of Normal Human Oral Mucosa*, sets the scene clearly and concisely. The next two chapters deal with basic physiological and immunological considerations, while the remaining eight chapters discuss various aspects of oral mucosal disease. Even those with a specialized knowledge of oral mucosa are likely to find much that is new to them, and the extensive lists of references provide

a valuable key to the literature. In a brief review there is no point in listing small criticisms: this is a valuable and nicely produced book.

I. R. H. KRAMER

Applied Surgical Pathology. Edited by A. E. Stuart, A. N. Smith, and E. Samuel. (Pp. viii + 1112; illustrated; £38.00.) Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1975.

In the preface the editors point out that this book is written primarily for surgeons and those undergoing surgical training, but also that it seeks to integrate pathology, radiology, and surgery in a systematic account of disease and may be of use to other disciplines. There are 45 authors, almost all from Scotland.

The value of 22 sections to the pathologist in training varies considerably. Those on trauma, the breast, the adrenal gland, the alimentary tract, the central nervous system, and bones and joints are excellent, with valuable emphasis on pathological and radiological co-operation in diagnosis in the last-mentioned chapter.

The bulk of the remaining contributions are good and well illustrated, although a number of photomicrographs of the liver are unsatisfactory. There is a useful brief account of the current problems of lymph-node tumour pathology and a good chapter on the spleen, a difficult subject for the trainee.

A number of chapters are unsatisfactory. The discrepancy between the title of chapter 2 in the list of contents, 'Cancer and the cancer cell' and as it appears in the text 'The cellular basis of malignant disease' perhaps indicates some confusion of purpose, but from the pathological point of view there is not a satisfactory account of either. The chapter on the skin sits uneasily in the book, and certain other chapters, although well written, are of limited value because of the problem of space in a primarily surgical book.

There are some important pathological errors, for example, the polyps of the Peutz-Jeghers syndrome are described as adenomatous, although not in the chapter on the alimentary tract. Errors in production and editing are rare; a caption appears twice in the bone and joint chapter and there is some cross-chapter reiteration, but these are minor faults.

More important in a book of this size is

the fact that, during reading over a period of about a month, the binding disintegrated. The reviewer is an obsessional book lover (whatever the content) and this was not due to clumsy handling. Contacting the publishers resulted in an assurance that this fault had been rectified, but purchasers should beware, since at this price the book must be a reference volume.

C. L. BERRY

Histopathology of the Skin, 5th edition. By Walter F. Lever and Gundula Schaumburg-Lever. (Pp. 793; illustrated; £36.40.) Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott. 1975.

When Dr Lever's book first appeared in 1949 it instantly became, and has since remained, the universal standard work on its subject. With each edition it has increased in size, weight, and cost; its contents have increased and its popularity has been maintained. The appearance of this latest edition amply confirms the continuation of all these trends. Newly described conditions have been included, there has been much re-writing of previous chapters, and it has been still further brought up to date by the inclusion of a section on the role of electron microscopy in the pathology of skin disease.

One of the strong points of this book all along has been the general excellence of its references. But paradoxically there are still some strange flaws. For example, in the text it is stated that subcorneal pustular dermatosis was first described by Sneddon and Wilkinson in 1956. Yet the original article describing it does not appear in the list of references. This is a minor criticism. A major one is the quality of the illustrations, too many of which are quite disgracefully bad.

In spite of this serious shortcoming the book will continue to hold its place until overtaken by one of equal scope but better quality.

I. W. WHIMSTER

Yearbook of Cancer 1975. Compiled and edited by R. L. Clark and R. W. Cumley. (Pp. 655; illustrated; £13.20.) Chicago: Yearbook Medical Publishers. 1975.

This book contains abstracts of 329 articles, many illustrated, selected from a literature search of 14 660 papers by a distinguished international editorial committee. The editors make useful comments about the selected papers, cite almost 800

more articles, and suggest additional reading. The articles are arranged, according to topic, anatomically. There are also sections concerned with various diagnostic modalities, therapeutic techniques, and pertinent basic sciences.

There is necessarily a good deal of personal opinion involved in selecting the particular article to be abstracted, but this is unimportant for the general reader who can rest assured that no important development is likely to pass without adequate exposition. Anyone who is responsible for the care of cancer patients will find this series of books a good way to keep abreast of developments in the field; and, for the physician or surgeon who meets the problems of cancer only sporadically as part of a larger practice, I know of no equivalent way of obtaining a rapid survey of the current status of diagnosis and treatment.

P. K. BONDY

Clinical Bacteriology, 4th edition. By E. Joan Stokes. (Pp. x + 394; illustrated; £6.95) London: Edward Arnold. 1975.

This 4th edition of a well-known and valuable book is attractively presented in paper-back at an acceptable price. Like its predecessors it brings together a great deal of careful description of technical methods used in diagnostic microbiology and much informative discussion of clinical aspects. Each procedure, involving specimen, investigation and report, is viewed in a clinical context.

As well as chapters on the isolation and identification of organisms from all types of specimen from every system of the body, the book contains sections on general procedure, antibacterial drugs, clinical immunology, hospital epidemiology, and media testing and other techniques. All sections cannot be equally recommended; I found those parts dealing with the culture of specimens and with antibacterial drugs particularly impressive but was relatively disappointed in the presentations on tuberculosis and brucellosis.

This book has always had an especial appeal to microbiologists because of the strong vein of common sense, experience, and insight that runs through its text. Regarded as a simple primer of clinical microbiology, it can be criticized as giving overemphasis to variations, difficulties, and unusual circumstances, but to a laboratory worker it must be invaluable. I cannot imagine that many can read its

well-argued points of view without questioning some aspect of their own practice. It should have a place in all microbiology laboratories.

G. L. GIBSON

Clinical Cancer Chemotherapy. Edited by Ezra M. Greenspan. (Pp. xvii + 414; illustrated; \$18.25.) Amsterdam: North Holland Publishing Co. 1975.

In a small volume the editors have collected information on most of the major areas of modern cancer chemotherapy in reviews that are concise and up-to-date. Though directed at the practising oncologist, this volume is also recommended for other physicians, surgeons, and family practitioners. There are introductory chapters on the biochemical and pharmacological aspects of cytotoxic drug therapy as well as the formal classification of drugs in common use. The rest of the book is devoted to individual tumours at various sites, including both haematological malignancies and solid tumours.

Most of the chapters on specific diseases are well dealt with, not only in terms of the chemotherapy of these diseases but also providing up-to-date information on the relevant associated biological parameters of the diseases and the general medical problems that arise. In general, it is an excellent volume that can be recommended. Perhaps for the practising oncologist one or two chapters provide less of an over-view than might have been expected. This certainly applies to the section on the non-Hodgkin lymphomas. This is small criticism of an excellent book that is extremely lucid and provides, in all sections, excellent bibliographical information.

H. BUSH